

**WASHINGTON, D.C.** – Congresswoman Loretta Sanchez (CA-47) today questioned key Department of Homeland Security officials during a Committee on Homeland Security hearing on current and emerging terrorist threats facing the United States and efforts by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) to thwart such attacks. Rep. Sanchez was particularly interested in the FBI's probes into the American Muslim communities of Orange County.

"I have the honor of representing one of the largest Arab American communities in the United States and have been very concerned in recent months by the FBI's recent probes into our local American Muslim community and its practice of planting informants in community centers and mosques," said Rep. Sanchez. "Director Michael Leiter of the National Counterterrorism Center assured me that actions have been taken so that law enforcement officials do not intimidate a place of worship and that enforcement agencies do not conduct any investigation that is unwarranted."

Rep. Sanchez also expressed concern about the possibility of terrorists exploiting the Visa Waiver Program, which allows citizens of specific countries to visit the United States for a limited amount of time without obtaining a visa. Secretary of Homeland Security Janet Napolitano responded that the Visa Waiver program is very secure, given the high volume of passengers who come into the country, and that investments in Visa Overstay and Immigration and Customs Enforcement are some of the most valuable tools in the fight against terrorism.

"I am encouraged by the testimonies received here today, and I look forward to working with the Secretary in finally implementing the US-VISIT Exit System to ensure that those who enter our country, exit it as well and do not overstay their visa. I also look forward to working with my colleagues this Congress as we determine how best to combat current and emerging terrorist threats facing the homeland."